

Board tabs officers; welcomes new members

Andrew A. Mueller of Ouray County was elected unanimously as Board President at the Colorado River District's Jan. 20, 2009, meeting of its Board of Directors. **Tom Sharp** of Routt County was elected unanimously as the Board's Vice President.

Mueller is an attorney from Ridgeway, and Sharp is an attorney from Steamboat Springs. Officers serve a one-year term presiding over the 15-member Board of Directors which in turn oversees the Colorado River District's business.

The Colorado River District was formed under state law in 1937 to protect Western Colorado water in matters including transmountain diversions, water supply, conservation and operation of the Colorado River Compacts.

The Board saw other turn-of-the-year transitions. Annually, five members of the Board are up for appointment. All appointments are made by the respective County Commissions of the member counties.

Terms are for three years. Reappointments in 2009 include rancher **Bill Trampe** of Gunnison by Gunnison County, rancher **Forrest Nelson** of Meeker by Rio Blanco County, attorney **Stephen M. Mathis** of Montrose by Montrose County and **Mueller** by Ouray County. Newly appointed to the Board by Gar-



The Colorado River District Board of Directors for 2009 include, front row, from left: Warner Dewey of Hinsdale County, Vice President Tom Sharp of Routt County, President Andrew A. Mueller of Ouray County, Rebie Hazard of Saguache County, David Merritt of Garfield County and Forrest Nelson of Rio Blanco County; back row: Dick Proctor of Mesa County, Tom Alvey of Delta County, Bill Trampe of Gunnison County, James Newberry of Grand County, Stephen M. Mathis of Montrose County, Tom Gray of Moffat County, John Ely of Pitkin County and Tom Long of Summit County.

field County was water engineer **David Merritt** of Glenwood Springs, replacing **Dick Stephenson**.

The Board also saw an off-cycle vacancy filled when Delta County appointed fruit grower **Tom Alvey** of Hotchkiss.

He replaced **Pete Kasper**, the outgoing Board President. Outstanding is an appointment from Eagle County to cover a resignation.

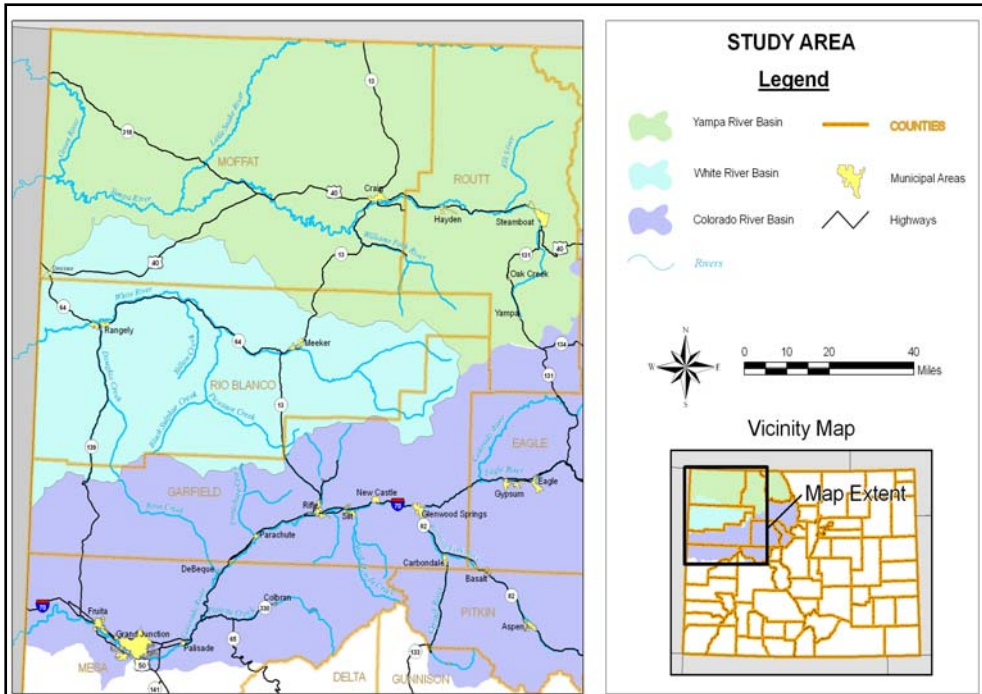
Incumbent Board members include **Sharp** of Routt County, **Rebie Hazard** of Saguache County, **Tom Long** of Summit County, **Tom Gray** of Moffat County, **James Newberry** of Grand County, **John Ely** of Pitkin County, **Dick Proctor** of

Mesa County and **Warner Dewey** of Hinsdale County.

Board approves new mission statement

As part of a strategic planning effort, the Colorado River District Board approved a new mission statement:

“To lead in the protection, conservation, use and development of the water resources of the Colorado River basin for the welfare of the District, and to safeguard for Colorado all waters of the Colorado River to which the state is entitled.”



This map depicts the study area for water demands by energy development.

Update given on study measuring potential water demands by energy

The Colorado River District Board heard Deputy General Manager Dan Birch report on the recently released Energy Development Water Needs Assessment, Phase I.

The study finds that oil shale portends to be the biggest user of water, specifically for the allied power required to process the shale into fuel. The study estimates the water demands needed to support the extraction and production of natural gas, coal, uranium and oil shale in northwest Colorado.

Specific elements of the report included assessing water rights and

investigating not only the direct water demands associated with energy development but also the indirect water demands from population growth and power generation.

Findings within the report concluded that, with the exception of oil shale development, water needs for all energy sectors could be significant but not expected to exceed water availability. The development of oil shale represents the greatest uncertainty and the greatest challenge.

The study was commissioned by the Colorado Basin and Yampa/White Basin Roundtables. Phase II,

a study of where the energy company water rights might be developed, is at its beginning stages.

The Roundtables are seeking to use the study in conjunction with the Statewide Water Supply Initiative and the pending Colorado River Water Availability Study, to develop basinwide consumptive needs assessments of their areas.

Preview given on 2009 Legislature

The Colorado Legislature convened January 7 and will remain in session for the following 120 days. External Affairs Manager Chris Treese reviewed the 12 water-related bills that had been introduced to date.

The Colorado River District Board adopted positions on each bill. Among the bills the Colorado River District is supporting are appropriations for the state water efficiency grant program and two bills creating legal mechanisms for precipitation capture from rooftops.

Additionally, the Board resolved to oppose House Bill 1142 creating new provisions for the election of water conservancy district directors.

Treese also reviewed the bleak state of the state's finances and warned of difficult times ahead for the state budget and any bills requiring state funding.

He also warned of anticipated fee increases and transfers of dedicated water program funds to the General Fund.



Colorado River District

Protecting Western Colorado Water Since 1937

Policies reviewed on Federal Reserved Water Rights, Prior Appropriation

In 2005 the Colorado River District Board adopted a schedule for the annual review of roughly one-third of the District's policies.

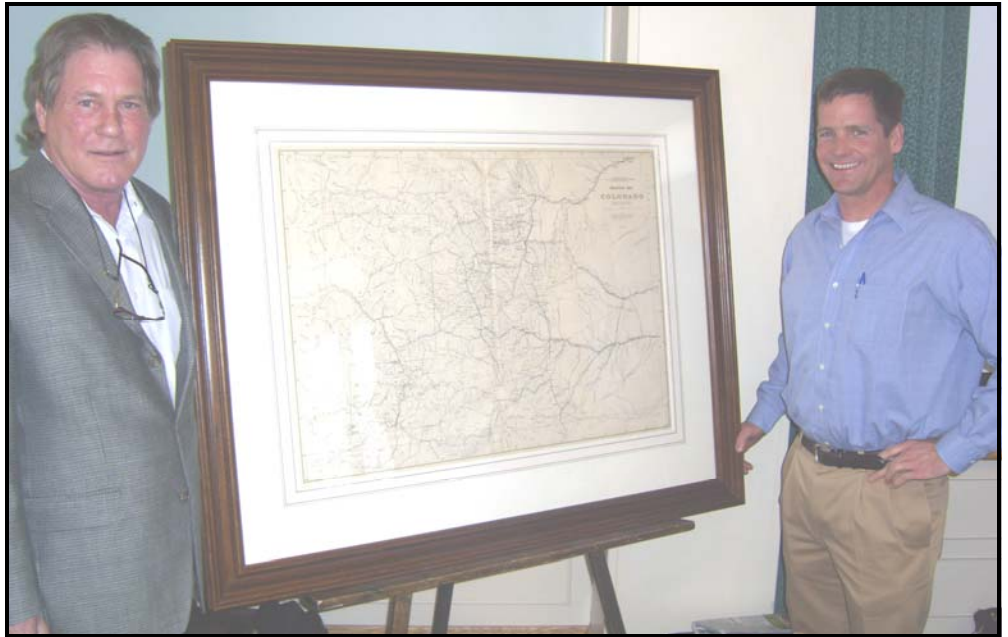
This year the Board reviewed and made preliminary changes to two existing policies: Federal Reserved Water Rights and Colorado's Prior Appropriation Process.

The former calls on Congress and the President to explicitly identify any water requirement related to any new reservation or change in designation of federal lands (e.g., wilderness).

Additionally, the policy calls for quantification in Colorado's water courts of the minimum amount of water necessary, if any, to meet the requirements of the designation.

Further, the policy advocates for similar actions related to water requirements for lands previously reserved but lacking Colorado Water Court quantification of water needs.

The Board also re-affirmed its historical belief in and support of Colorado's Prior Appropriation Doctrine as a fair and orderly system for allocating and administering Colorado's scarce water resources.



Glenwood Springs water attorney Lee Leavenworth, left, presented the Colorado River District with a Colorado drainage map dating from 1877. The map was created by the United States Geological Service. It shows the Colorado River as the Grand River (the name changed in 1922) and the Crystal River as Rock Creek. The map now hangs in the Colorado River District offices. At right is Board President Andrew A. Mueller.

The policy, however, distinguishes between the intra-state and inter-state allocation of Colorado River waters.

Just as the negotiators to the 1922 Colorado River Compact distinguished between intra-state and inter-state water allocation systems, the Colorado River District believes alternatives to the strict application of the Prior Appropriation Doctrine provide greater equity in the allocation and administration of Colorado River basin water.

Both revised policies will be posted on the Colorado River District's website for public comment and put on the agenda for final con-

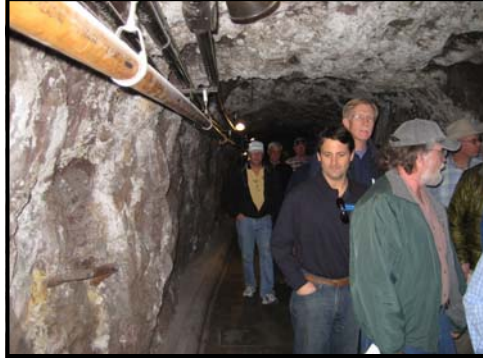
sideration at the April Board meeting.

Future meetings

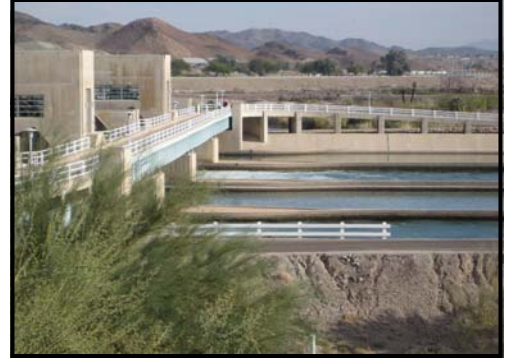
- **Feb. 19:** Special Meeting Conference Calls During the legislative session, every other Thursday at noon
- **March 12:** Executive Committee Meeting, Glenwood Springs
- **April 21-22:** Second Regular Quarterly Meeting, Glenwood Springs
- **July 21-22:** Third Regular Quarterly Meeting, Glenwood Springs
- **July 22-24:** Western Water Workshop, Crested Butte



Officials from the Colorado River District, the Southwestern Water Conservation District and the Colorado Water Conservation Board toured Colorado River water facilities in the Lower Basin states of Nevada, Ari-



zona and California. From left, the tour group observes the penstocks at the Colorado River pumping station of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California where water begins its journey across the state. In



the middle, the group inspects a tunnel in the bowels of the Hoover Dam. At right are the Imperial Irrigation District diversion structures near the Mexican border where river water moves into the All-American Canal.

Searching for lessons in the Lower Colorado River Basin

Colorado River District Board members, staff, Colorado Water Conservation Board officials and representatives from the Southwestern Water Conservation District toured Lower Colorado River Basin facilities and irrigation districts in January.

Colorado River District General Manager Eric Kuhn reported to the full board that the goal was to learn what lessons could be applied to Colorado in the coming years.

To that end, the group met with Palo Verde and Imperial Irrigation District officials to learn about agricultural water leases to cities in California through rotational fallowing of irrigated lands. Participants also met with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, a beneficiary of water leasing.

The Colorado River District and the Southwestern District are working with state water officials on a plan for Colorado where pre-1922 water rights could be used to offset demands of a Colorado River compact curtailment.

In that event, the Upper Basin states in the compact, including Colorado, would be required to bypass water to meet the Upper Basin's delivery obligations to the Lower Basin states of Arizona, California and Nevada.

The vision is to create an insurance plan in Colorado where pre-1922 water rights that are exempt from compact administration could

be put in a "bank."

The "banked" water could be used to supply critical needs in Colorado that have junior rights. The plan requires willing participants, both "sellers" and "buyers."

Future meetings

Continued from page 3

- **Aug. 19-21:** Colorado Water Congress Summer Convention, Steamboat Springs
- **Sept. 18:** River District Annual Water Seminar, Grand Junction
- **Oct. 20-21:** Fourth Regular Quarterly Meeting, Glenwood Springs

How to contact us

For more information about the Colorado River District or board actions, call Jim Pokrandt at (970) 945-8522 x 236 or e-mail edinfo@crwcd.org. Visit www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org.